The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor covering in the industrial, legislative, and political fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
I BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1698 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1943 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 33, NO. 43

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

One of the troubles with working at union headquarters and not getting a chance to get out into the field is that our thinking gets *so* be too "organizational." We find ourselves thinking in terms of millions rather than the individual, about mass problems rather than the day-to-day troubles of the man in overalls.

Now do we often encounter in current literature anything to remind us of how the fight made by the trade unions for workers affects the home life of Jimmy Jones or Tom Brown or Johnny Nolan.

And that's why it was so refreshing and interesting to us to read about the struggle and experiences of Johnny Nolan and his family in a recent novel called "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn." The author is Betty Smith. We don't know her and have never heard of her before. We say this so as to avoid any suspicion of log-rolling when we recommend it to our readers.

The book is worth reading if only for the few brief passages which tell of what his union means to Johnny Nolan and his family. These passages are significant because obviously the author has no personal axe to grind. She is merely reporting a fact in the life of Johnny Nolan and his family.

Said Johnny To His Daughter

Johnny was born with two strikes against him—poverty and the soul of an artist. He was a singer. He sang for beer and he earned a few dollars occasionally as an extra waiter on Saturday nights. The following scene between him and his daughter Francie occurs on one of these Saturday evenings as Johnny is preparing to go to work:

"He took the silex of bread and turned it over. The Union sticker was on that place. 'Good bread made by Union bakers'. He pulled the sticker off. A thought struck him. 'The Union Label on my apron!'

"'It's right here, sewn in the seam. I'll iron it out.'

"'That label is like an ornament,' he explained, 'like a rose that you wear. Look at my Waiters Union button.'

"The pale green-and-white button was fastened in his lapel. He polished it with his sleeve.

"'Before I joined the Union the bosses paid me what they felt like. Sometimes they paid me nothing. Now they said, would take care of me. Some places even charged me for the privilege of working. The tips were so big, they said, they could sell the waiting concession. Then I joined the Union. Your mother wouldn't begrudge the Union dues. Some of the jobs where the boss has to pay me certain wages, regardless of tips. All trades should be unionized.'

"'Yes, Papa.' By now, Francie was ironing away. She loved to hear him talk."

"Like A Rose That You Wear"

Toward the end of the book, after Johnny has died and his family is about to take a step upward on the social and economic ladder, another significant scene takes place. Francie is ironing a shirt for her brother, Neely, who is going out to the theater. The book goes on:

"Francie looked for the Union Label in Neeley's shirt and pressed that first.

"'That label is like an ornament . . . like a rose that you wear.')

"The Nolans sought for the union label on everything they bought. It was their memorial to Johnny."

Just those few paragraphs bring home to us more clearly and sharply than the piled up experiences of a year on the job the realization of what the union and the union label mean to millions of workers in this country who had to begin at scratch and fight and suffer for the right to organize.

Those who join an already established union today merely by walking up and slapping down an initiation fee and dues don't and can't fully appreciate what their union means to them and does for them.

Nor will the smart-aleck editorial writers, now-time vicious labor baiters ever understand the loyalty and devotion of union members who have gone through the mill with their organization. It is that loyalty and devotion which make the trade union movement invincible.

AFL Leaders On Visit To Fort Knox Get First-Hand View Of Blitz War

Union-Made Equipment Is Put Through Paces For Labor Men In Full-Scale Sham Attack

Ft. Knox, Ky.—AFL leaders got an eye-filling, ear-splitting and pulse-lifting demonstration of blitz warfare in which was unleashed on them all the mirrored command as guests of the U. S. Army.

Called by President William Green and Secretary-Treasurer George Meany, a group of AFL workers in being were converged here from Washington and various points of the country, for a two-day visit which was filled with exciting incidents and significant information on how the war equipment built and made by AFL workers is being used against the enemy by American troops.

The program emphasized action rather than speech-making, which was limited to a few short words by Maj. Gen. Alvan C. Gillem, commanding officer, and an informal expression of appreciation by Mr. Green.

The AFL chief emphasized how deeply impressed the union representatives were by the performance of the armored command and the planes, guns and tanks they used, which he described as "the best in the world."

"I want you to know," he told a group of several hundred officers and trainees, "that we intend to see to it that they continue to be the best and that the men on the fighting fronts get all the weapons and ammunition they need.

"American labor and you men of the Army are on the same team in this war. Together we are going to win our enemies such a thorough whipping that they will never dare to take us on again. That's our purpose and I know it's yours, too.

"We of labor have every confidence in the world in you. We want you to have the same confidence in us."

"Our visit here has thoroughly convinced me and my colleagues that you are the finest and toughest fighting men in the world. We know that when you get over there on the enemy you will take what comes courageously and dish out a lot more than you get. And we want you to know that we of labor are going to back you up with the finest, the best and the greatest quantity of fighting equipment that human skill, sweat and ingenuity can put out. We have proof positive of that fact will strengthen and speed the production of your arms.

"And we want you also to know that when you come back home again, as Americans, free citizens, we are determined to do everything possible to see to it that you get your old job back—or a better job—and that you get a chance to make up for lost time in the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness in our beloved land."

Perhaps the most impressive show of the labor visit was a full-scale sham attack put on by dive-bombers, fighting planes, troops, tanks and the whole panoply for the visiting union leaders and a large group of American officers.

As a chilling and penetrating northeaster swept down upon the observation post from the Kentucky hills, troops under protection of smoke-screens crept up on two "enemy" pillboxes with the aid of demolition bombs, flame-throwers and heavy tank fire, blasted the concrete strongholds out of existence.

A corps of engineers, also protected by smoke-screens, then rushed forward to mop up "enemy" mines planted in the roadways. With these preliminaries out of the way, the dive bombers went into action and swept the disputed terrain with a spectacular burst of tracer bullets, first as the planes swooped down lower than the surrounding woods. The tanks then rolled up from three directions and put on an amazing display of precision gunnery. Every machine installation on the first ridge burst into flames as the operators and machine guns poured a deadly accurate fire into them. With heavy bombers and artillery tearing the "enemy" terrain positions in the rear to bits, the tanks then rolled up for the final coup.

The sham battle was complete in every detail, even to the operations of a fully-equipped medical unit right behind the attacking lines.

After the completion of these thrilling manuevers, the labor leaders were driven on a tour of the elaborate installations of this 100,000-acre fort and the auto caravan finally drove up at Brooks Field for a review of a mass parade.

The visitors were entertained at dinner at the Officers' Club and slept overnight there. "Far from roughing it," they found accommodations as good as at a fine hotel.

After breakfast at headquarters on the second morning, the union leaders witnessed another thrilling fighting scene—a demonstration of village street fighting at Canby Hill.

A tour of the armored school followed. This afforded the AFL representatives an opportunity of seeing how trainees in the armored command are taught to operate and care for and repair the heavy and specialized equipment they must use. Luncheon at the first student regiment mess wound up the visit and the labor union leaders took their departure in the afternoon, delighted with the trip and glad of the opportunity to get better acquainted with Uncle Sam's Army.

Those who accompanied Mr. Green and Mr. Meany on the expedition included L. P. Lindelof, president of the Painters; Foster J. Pratt, president of the Technical Engineers; John Hosteli, president of the Operative Plasterers; William J. McSorley, president of the Lathers; Harry Stevenson, president of the Molders; P. J. Morrin, president of the Ironworkers, and Lyons and Mr. Berry, officers of the same union; Frank P. Converse, of the Operating Engineers; M. L. Hutcheson, vice president of the Carpenters; A. J. Cleland, vice president of the Bricklayers; Earl Mellon, vice president of the Machinists; Patrick Drew, of the Plumbers; Leon Kelsford, of the Sheet Metal Workers; Ed Denny, of the Boilermakers; Harry Hayes, of the Blacksmiths; Joe Lee Wilson, of the I. L. O.; Gordon Freeman, of the Electrical Workers, and R. Heller, of the Bakery Workers.

War Department representatives, who conducted the tour, included James F. Mitchell, Maj. Gen. Joe N. Dalton, Col. William Watters, Maj. Daniel L. Boland, Maj. A. H. Raskin and Capts. Joseph A. Frank and C. B. Wade.

U. S. Workers To Visit British Plants

Washington, D. C.—A plan to exchange war plant workers between the United States and Britain will be inaugurated this month with the departure from the U. S. next week for a month's visit to British factories of U. S. Army installations in the British Isles, it was announced by the Office of War Information, announced. The Office of War Information, announced. The Ministry of Information are jointly sponsoring the project.

The U. S. workers, all designated by labor committees or local unions in their own plants, will make the trip by air. They include people in the labor movement doubled American interest in providing weapons for our armed forces will stand out in big black letters. But the fact that they performed the spearhead of the attack against wildly rising living costs will rank almost equally in importance."

OPA intends to hold the cost of living down by resisting all pressures for increased retail prices, except under the most unusual circumstances and by the skillful use of production bonuses or subsidies on a limited scale, Bowles said.

Organized Labor To Be Represented On Federal Food Problem Agencies

Boston—Organized labor is going to get representation on key government agencies dealing with food problems as the result of an epochal Food and Nutrition Conference held here during the recent AFL convention under the auspices of the AFL Union Label Trades Department.

Assurances to this effect were received from Director Roy F. Hendrickson of the WFA's Food Distribution Administration and other high-ranking government leaders who addressed the conference.

AFL President William Green, Secretary-Treasurer George Meany and other Federation representatives at the conference stressed the need of better nutrition for workers and the necessity of lower food prices.

A plea for united action by organized labor and the farmers to stem the rising tide of inflation was offered to the conference by James G. Patton, president of the National Farmers Union.

He declared that American agriculture is still not converted and mobilized to meet the war and post-war food needs that confront this nation and the entire world.

He blamed the powerful "farm bloc" for maintaining "farming-as-usual" basis gaining for American agriculture, along with banking, insurance, business and food-packing interests.

In similar vein, Boris Shishkin, AFL economist, urged joint action by organized labor and farmers to bring about a stabilized economy.

Dr. Mark Graubard, director of labor education for the War Manpower Administration, gave an interesting and informative talk on food "habits" and how they may have to be changed by the impact of shortages in certain favorite articles.

Mrs. Herman H. Lowe told of the important work being done by the American Federation of Women's Auxiliaries of Labor, with the headquarters in policing price ceilings and securing compliance with rationing procedures.

While admitting that the program of the Office of Price Administration is still lacking in the vital elements of success, OPA General Manager Chester A. Bowles reported some progress in efforts to push back prices to Sept. 15, 1942, levels.

To labor's everlasting credit, Bowles said, "you chose to get out of the race between uncontrolled rising prices and uncontrolled rising prices, wages could be sure to lose.

"You accepted the responsibility not only for yourself, but for all the millions of every-day Americans in all parts of the country, of helping to make wartime controls control effective.

"From the history of this war is written the fact that any people in the labor movement doubled American interest in providing weapons for our armed forces will stand out in big black letters. But the fact that they performed the spearhead of the attack against wildly rising living costs will rank almost equally in importance."

OPA intends to hold the cost of living down by resisting all pressures for increased retail prices, except under the most unusual circumstances and by the skillful use of production bonuses or subsidies on a limited scale, Bowles said.

Union Plants Most Efficient

By far the best prediction is obtained in plants where managements sit down with unions and adjust their quarrels at the bargaining table, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins declared.

"Good industrial relations grow out of the experience of labor and management working together," she said. "Where labor and management settle their differences directly, the results show up in terms of higher morale, greater production and fewer strikes.

"Plant experience clearly indicates that fuller utilization of grievance machinery throughout American industry would materially reduce the number of disputes requiring governmental agencies today."

Secretary Perkins said the Department of Labor would soon issue a pamphlet, entitled, "Settling Plant Grievances," for the guidance of industry with the aim of encouraging more collective bargaining and less government intervention in the adjustment of disputes.

News Briefs

INT'L LABOR PRESS RAISES MONTHLY DUES

Boston—Two important resolutions were adopted at the 83d annual meeting of the International Labor Press which was held here during the AFL convention.

The first action was to raise the dues of members publications from 25 cents to 50 cents a month beginning Nov. 1. The second decision was to hold the annual meeting on Saturday, Nov. 18, 1944—two days before the 64th annual convention of the AFL opens in New Orleans. Previously the labor press meeting had been held after the opening session of the AFL conclave. The new move was made to assure fuller attendance and to make more time available for discussion and action.

AFL Vice President Matthew Woll was elected president of International Labor Press and R. E. Woodmansee, secretary-treasurer. Two new vice presidents were elected—Ruth Taylor, newspaper columnist of New York City, and Michael Joseph, publisher of a labor paper at Michigan City, Ind.

LUMMUS CO. DRAFTSMEN ELECT AFL AFFILIATE

New York City.—In a run-off election, the employes of the Lummus Company voted for AFL representation through the International Association of Technical Engineers, Architects, and Draftsmen's Union.

The United Front offices at 420 Lexington Avenue, about 400 engineers and draftsmen do the designing for the plants of the Lummus Company. The designers and builders of all types of distillation equipment for the chemical, petroleum, and allied industries.

Recently the NLRB was called in to hold an election, which resulted in a vote of 141 for the AFL union; 117 for the CIO, and 70 votes for neither.

In the run-off election, Local 66, IFTEA & DU, was accorded bargaining rights by a vote of 188 to 130. By this overwhelming vote, the technical men doing the designing work for the Lummus Company, will participate in union cooperation with the AFL organizations of the Building Trades Department, Charles Donatelli who struck the plates.

E. J. VANDELEUR DIES; CALIFORNIA AFL LEADER

San Francisco, Calif.—Edward J. Vandeleur, secretary of the California Federation of Labor, is dead at 57 of a second stroke. He suffered the first one after the legislature refused to sustain Robert L. Colbert Jr.'s veto of the anti-hot cargo bill last November.

Vandeleur was president of the San Francisco Labor Council from 1933 to 1937 and in 1935 and 1936 president of the state federation.

In 1937, when Paul Scharrenberg, now state director of public welfare, resigned as state federation secretary, Vandeleur was given his successor. He held this post ever since.

Charles Real, president of the Alameda county local for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and a vice president of the California State Federation of Labor, has been named by President C. J. Haggerty as temporary successor to Vandeleur.

NATIONAL SECURITY AWARD ESTABLISHED BY THE OCD

Washington, D. C.—"The National Security Award is dedicated to North plants in industrial plants and related facilities for outstanding accomplishment in the field of civilian security," declared John R. Martin, Acting Director, U. S. Office of Civilian Defense, in announcing the statement said: "Proper standards of protection, and a workable plan on the plant's products, location, number of employes, types of construction, and other factors. In addition, fire experience and accident frequency records will be considered. Small as well as large establishments are eligible for this OCD award."

NAZIS FEAR REVOLT OF DUTCH WORKERS

New York — That the Nazis are taking no chances in preparing for an Allied invasion of Europe's west coast, is proved by their wholesale expulsion of all leaves of Dutch workers within the Reich. This new decree of Hitler's, which is aimed at preventing any possible revolt, is the largest possible number of workers as hostages in view of the Nazis' knowledge that any revolt against their oppressors and drive them from Dutch soil. Apparently the Nazis consider it safer to have them inside the Reich, under the watchful eyes of their own gestapo.

FDR Orders Probe of Living Costs Which May Bring Higher Wage Rates

President's Decision Comes After Parley With Organized Labor Leaders

Washington, D. C.—Organized labor's leaders won President Roosevelt's promise to make a realistic determination of the increase in the cost of living with a view to possible upward revision of the "Little Steel" wage formula.

This was announced by AFL President William Green after a two-hour meeting of the Combined Labor War Board with the President at the White House.

The President himself suggested, Mr. Green said, that a committee of three members of the War Labor Board investigate and examine the present methods by which the Department of Labor estimates living costs.

It is assumed that if this can be proved by the new investigation, the President will agree to an adjustment of the "Little Steel formula" which will permit wide wage increases for most American workers to make up for the higher living costs.

Representatives of the AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhoods told the President at the meeting that the "Little Steel" wage formula is outdated, unworkable and untenable in the light of price increases.

They charged that the only portion of the nation's economic stabilization program which has really been put into effect has been stabilization of wages.

They asserted that no real progress has been made to date in rolling back prices to Sept. 15, 1942 levels, as the Economic Stabilization Act requires. Instead, prices are still going up day after day.

President Green emphasized that the labor representatives especially the men in the service of men, represented by Economic Stabilization Director Vinson, War Mobilization Director Byrnes or anyone else over wage adjustments voted by the War Labor Board and other Federal agencies.

The labor leaders particularly called the President's attention to Vinson's indefensible veto of the 8 cents an hour wage increase awarded to a million non-operating railroad employes by a special Presidential Commission.

"We did not call for the removal of Vinson or any particular individual," Mr. Green explained to the press. "What we did object to was the exercise of such arbitrary veto powers by an individual, no matter what his office. Our original no-strike pledge was based upon an understanding that disputes would be referred to and settled by a tripartite agency such as the National War Labor Board through democratic processes. We now find the decisions of this Board and other similar agencies arbitrarily set aside in an arbitrary way by one agency not even in existence at the time our agreement was made. We want the original and full powers of the War Labor Board restored to it."

Mr. Green added that he felt the investigation of cost of living indexes ordered by the President would be helpful. He said:

"We question seriously the accuracy of the figures put out by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor."

Other AFL representatives who attended the White House conference were Secretary-Treasurer George Meany and Vice President Daniel J. Tobin. They agreed fully with the conclusions expressed by Mr. Green.

Brown Resigns As OPA Director

Washington, D. C.—Prentiss M. Brown, whose removal as OPA Director was demanded by organized labor several months ago, has resigned from office.

In a letter to the President, Mr. Brown presented a detailed defense of price control administration but he admitted that "without a subsidy plan the price structure cannot be held and wages will be forced upwards."

Chester Bowles, now general manager of OPA, is expected to succeed Brown as top man in the agency.

Meanwhile, support for price subsidies was given to the President by James G. Patton, head of the National Farmers Union. In a letter replying to Patton, the President said:

"I am glad to know that the farmers you represent appreciate that our farm-support program should be operated in a manner which will not only insure maximum production but will hold down the costs of the family food basket.

"I am convinced that opposition to the use of limited and judicious subsidies for this two-fold purpose is not in the best interests of the American farmer."

The House Banking and Currency Committee has reported out a measure banning all food subsidies after June 30, but the American Federation of Labor will fight this measure to the limit and insist on wider and more effective subsidies to hold down food prices.

Industrial Accident Prevention Backed by AFL, Ornburn Declares

Washington, D. C.—"The American Federation of Labor is officia" and solidly behind the wartime campaign to stop industrial accidents," declared Secretary-Treasurer I. M. Ornburn of the AFL Union Label Trades Department in the "Labor for Victory"-program broadcast over the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company.

The appalling tragedy of fatalities suffered by labor was set forth by Ned H. Dearborn, executive vice president of the National Safety Council, when he said that "more than 18,000 of the job." Linking industrial accidents to the war effort he declared that "18,000 Americans have already been killed in the same amount of time lost through all work accidents in the United States.

"The American Federation of Labor has for many years recognized the need for greater work safety and has actually sought to reduce work accidents," Mr. Ornburn said. "We believe our members themselves are becoming more and more safety conscious, more and more capable of working without accidents that can be avoided. Thousands of our members have taken safety courses arranged by their local unions and organizations. From the workers themselves have come many of the best ideas for making safer working conditions.

"Our chief reason for existence is to see to it that the workers of our country are protected by union contracts which call their wages are high enough to sustain decent American standards of living, that their health and physical strength are not undermined by over-fatigue.

"In this endeavor we invite the cooperation of management, the Government and of the public at large.

"Yes, industrial safety for both war production and post-war reconversion demands all-out cooperation. But let the emphasize again that the worker must be the first consideration. The safety campaign must be founded on the worker and work conditions around him. Winning of confidence and cooperation is absolutely essential.

"The American Federation of Labor believes that the worker's confidence can best be gained through his own self-constituted organization—his trade union.

"We stand ready to go all the way in any cooperative drive against accidents. I want his voice this warning to all concerned: We must not be guilty of accepting the supine philosophy that 'Accidents will happen.' Rather we should proceed upon the truth that 'Accidents need not happen' and 'Accidents must not happen.' That's gone for both management and the individual workers.

"The American Federation of Labor is back of such an effort in this campaign to stop accidents and speed victory!"

Strike Loss Is Infinitesimal

Washington, D. C.—Only two-hundredths of 1 per cent of the number of man-days worked have been lost from labor disputes, "all of which have been settled peacefully," which the War Department has contact, according to James F. Mitchell, Labor Relations Director of the War Department.

Summing up his experiences with labor's "no strike" pledge, Mitchell stated that such losses "were so small as to be negligible."

"A better record than that in any human activity of such magnitude can hardly be imagined," he continued. "If we consider this, because it presents a picture drastically at variance with that held by the average newspaper reader."